



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

No. CCCXVIII.

MAY, 1883.

MEXICO.

MEXICO holds a relation to the United States which no other government or people can occupy. Canada refused to join us, and adhered to the Crown of Great Britain, when every interest and sympathy of her people would naturally have inclined them to unite with us. But Mexico looked up to us in her struggle for independence with admiration and confidence, took courage from our example, broke her chains, and, with too absolute trust in our wisdom, adopted almost the entire plan of our government as her own. If there is no just cause for any abatement of the confidence of the two republics toward each other, it would be the most grievous of wrongs to both that their sympathies should be chilled by unworthy suspicions, or that their free intercourse should be impeded by any lingering resentments which had their origin in causes that existed fifty years ago.

It is neither wise, just, nor patriotic in the present generation of the people of either republic to permit a needless check to be imposed upon the duty and the manifest desire of both to coöperate in the great work that both are doing, in proving to the world the ability of free, democratic, constitutional governments "to establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty"

VOL. CXXXVI.—NO. 318.

29

to their people and to other nations qualified for self-government.

Our former troubles with Mexico, like those that often arise between just and honorable people of the same race and nationality, have arisen mainly from the want of a full acquaintance with each other. There is no just cause for jealousy or estrangement between the people of the two countries. If there was ever a real sisterhood between nations, that relation exists between Mexico and the United States. So genuine was the regard of the people of the United States for their southern neighbor, that, in the long and bitter travail of Mexico during her fourteen years of war for independence, there was not a heart in an American bosom in the United States that did not share in the anguish of that desperate struggle, and rejoice triumphantly when it ended in the birth of another great constitutional republic. Mexico has done nothing to forfeit the esteem or to shake the confidence in which her people and government were held by us in 1824, when we so eagerly welcomed her into the family of nations; but much has been done since that event, which, when rightly understood, should exalt her in the estimation of mankind.

Let us briefly examine the undeniable facts on which this assertion is based, and, in doing this, let us consider the remarkable parallel which exists between our history and that of Mexico, in the difficulties that were met during the process of establishing the two republics. It will be seen that the glory of our success has by no means dimmed the honors that Mexico achieved in gaining her independence. In one respect, we had greatly the advantage of Mexico. Her people were wholly inexperienced in self-government. With them this was a lost art. Two hundred and fifty years of absolute and most despotic rule had extinguished every thought of self-government, except the tradition that Mexico had once been independent.

English rule in this country from the beginning recognized the spirit of liberty. It was established by a race of people who were highly enlightened and well equipped with every requisite for founding and governing new states. Their indoctrination in the rights of personal liberty, and the just limitations to be placed upon the powers of the rulers, was the result of long and bloody contests in which the English people had triumphed. Their teaching was practical and had qualified them, as skillful

and experienced pioneers, to lead the advance of the most powerful race that has ever existed, in founding their civilization in this land of unequaled resources. States, having little of foreign nurture or support, grew up, from the start, in rugged independence and self-reliance, under the name of British colonies. The smallest of them had the same autonomy with the greatest, and, from the beginning, exercised, almost without question, nearly all the essential powers of local sovereignty. It was only a question of time when those colonies would be free and independent states, prepared with every faculty of civil government to concentrate and put in force the whole power of their people.

Mexico, in 1810, had, by comparison, a much more powerful and obstinate foe to contend with; and there were no organized governments there to give color of lawfulness to the revolt of the people, or to furnish points of concentration to the movements of the patriots who were ready to strike for liberty. The only political departments then in Mexico were certain intendencies, with unmarked boundaries, which were designated by the viceregal government for the mere convenience of gathering taxes and keeping the people constantly under the eye of authority.

In estimating the difficulties which the United States and Mexico respectively had to encounter in their progress toward independence and self-government, the fact is not overlooked that, in 1810, the Spanish monarchy was weakened by the burdens of her vast colonial system, and that her monarch and the royal family were forced to abdicate in favor of Joseph Bonaparte, a French usurper. But this episode was of short duration, and when the restoration came, the reactionary effect upon Mexico was among the greatest of the disasters that befell her in her long struggle for independence.

Bonaparte's usurpation alarmed the priesthood in Mexico for the safety of their revenues and great landed estates, and they began to preach rebellion to the people. The people interpreted their selfish zeal into a love of liberty, and were roused as only that sentiment can arouse a suffering people. They were devout, and felt that God had called them to arm for liberty. And so their zeal for religion was united with their hopes of freedom, and they became frantic in their desire to make sacrifices on the altar of their country. For a short time the banners of the Church led the columns of the patriots to war.

The first impulse of the revolution came from the refusal of

the Mexican people to change their allegiance from the Spanish dynasty to the French usurper. This was sanctioned by the Church in Mexico. The restoration soon came, and the Mexican people were, in fact, ready to return to their allegiance, notwithstanding their solemn declaration of independence; but the fatal madness of imperial pride demanded that they should be punished for treason to the monarchic principle. The Spanish monarchy remembered the recent example of the British colonies, and determined to crush out every thought and hope of independence from the minds of the Mexicans. Their revolt against the usurper was translated into rebellion and treason against the Crown of Spain, and for that crime they were to be beaten with many stripes, and degraded and forced into uncomplaining submission to despotism. The Church saw its advantage, and deserted the cause of the people to gain the shelter of the monarchy.

In their extremity the Mexican people also remembered the example of the British colonies. So, too, they recalled their sufferings of two hundred and fifty years, and were desperate with anxiety for their release from that cruel bondage. And when, after they had enjoyed a moment of liberty under the banners of Hidalgo, they again felt the cruel goad of Spanish despotism, and saw that their last estate was to be worse than their first, they renewed their vows to liberty, took heart from our example, and became determined and steadfast in their resolve to be a free and independent nation. Some of the priesthood remained true to the people, but the Church, as a body, threw the weight of its immense influence against the independence of Mexico.

We cannot realize the significance of this fact in our own experience. To appreciate its true weight upon the Mexican mind, we must remember that their entire civilization had been drawn from the Church. It was to them both Divinity and State. It had taught a new language to the Indians, and with it a new religion. It had gained their affections by acts of personal kindness, and had amused their superstitious minds with the tinsel and glitter of pompous processions, and awed them by mysterious rites and ceremonies, while it levied tithes of all they had, and sold dispensations for every known crime, except heresy and blasphemy. The Mexicans were contending for the freedom of their country, but the Church was to them the soul of the country.

It is not strange, then, that the fires of liberty that melted the

chains of their civil bondage should have left the fetters which bound them to the Church unscathed. Nor is it strange that the recognition of the power of the Church was as much a necessary condition to the inauguration of the republic, after their independence had been gained, as was the recognition of slavery an indispensable condition to the formation of our federal government after we had gained our independence.

In the first Mexican constitution of 1824 it was ordained that "The religion of the Mexican nation is, and will be perpetually, the Roman Catholic Apostolic. The nation will protect it by wise and just laws, and prohibit the exercise of any other whatever." This evidence of the demand of the Church for supremacy over the civil power of the republic is enough to account for the greater part of the troubles experienced by Mexico in gaining her independence, and in establishing, afterward, a free democratic government. It is painful to recall the events which have marked the efforts of Mexico to eliminate from her constitution this fatal root of evil. An account of them would include the history of far the greater number of the revolutions that have so disturbed the peace of that country, and have so nearly resulted in convincing the world that Mexicans are incapable of self-government. We can understand something of the difficulty of Mexico's great task, now completed, of reforming the constitution by dropping from its text the article above quoted, when we reflect that it has cost the United States enormously in life, treasure, and property, and still costs us near \$100,000,000 a year in pensions, to strike from our constitution a similar guarantee of slavery.

To gain its independence of Spain, Mexico had to fight through fourteen years of bloody and inhuman warfare. And during nearly all of that time, and for thirty-three years since, it has had to battle with the Church party in Congress, in the council-chamber, in foreign courts, and in domestic and foreign wars, before it could finally establish the republic on safe and enduring foundations. The Church party, intrenched in the constitution, and invested with civil power which, added to its ecclesiastical influence, made it paramount over the Government, has always preferred monarchy, either under a foreign or native ruler, to the republic, because royalty is its strongest ally the world over. Mexico has, therefore, been confronted since 1824, and until 1866, with a question planted incautiously in her own

constitution, which has all the time threatened the overthrow of the republic. No people have ever been more constant to their principles, nor has there ever been an exhibition of more heroic sacrifice than they have made to secure self-government under a democratic republic, based on a written constitution.

These sister republics can afford to draw very near to each other in honest sympathy, leaving pride, jealousy, and resentments behind, when their people remember what it has cost each of them to reform its constitution so as to remove from each a guarantee that must have been fatal to the government. It is a startling reflection that the United States guaranteed slavery and made religion free, while Mexico abolished slavery and limited the right of worship to a single sect, and that both governments have been nearly destroyed by these restrictions upon liberty. It is the fixed belief of vast majorities of the people in both countries that neither government was, either in form or substance, a free democratic republic while those restrictions on liberty were in force. Under such circumstances we owe to Mexico more of sympathy than of censure, for her fortitude and persistence in harmonizing her organic law with the spirit of liberty.

In Mexico this duty has been more difficult than it was in the United States, because the Church had its home in every household, and it was difficult for the people to decide between the true interests of religion and the pretensions of divine authority set up by those who abused it for personal gain. The Church party went abroad for support. Some of the most powerful monarchs of Europe came to their assistance. The French emperor made the reformation of the constitution of Mexico in 1857 a pretext, if it was not the real motive of the French invasion. Louis Napoleon gave in charge to Maximilian the restoration of the Catholic Church, and its revenues and property, as one of the most important of his duties in Mexico. Forgetting that the same purpose had animated the Church party for a third of a century in creating strife and revolt in Mexico, he asserted, in vindication of his invasion, that the chronic state of revolution in that country justified the great powers in assuming its government by force, so as to secure peace to its people and its rich productions to the commerce of the world.

The Mexican people had to create their states while the war

of independence was flagrant. In this their task was harder than ours, but they so far succeeded that those states will remain through all coming time, whatever shall be the fate of the national government. The construction of the republic of Mexico was not completed until the people, led by Benito Juarez and Porfirio Diaz and their compatriots, had driven the French and Austrians from its territory; and the people of the United States were not content with their own government until it had abolished slavery. These events were almost contemporaneous, and they are regarded by the people of both countries as being vital and indispensable to the maintenance of free government. In this, their second birth, the two republics are brought into entire harmony in all their essential principles. In their efforts to secure perfect liberty to all classes of people, their sufferings were alike, and their success is equally honorable to both. They enter alike upon the achievement of a new and greater destiny without a disturbing apprehension of danger, with mutual confidence and respect, and in the closest natural alliance.

The races in the two countries differ in origin and language; but, if such differences make political or international comity undesirable, what shall we have to hope for when we consider the powers and privileges secured to the African race under our own constitution? The great body of the Mexican people are Indians. That the Indians should have been capable of restoring liberty to Mexico, after the lapse of centuries during which it was not heard of in that country, and that they should have succeeded in giving to it free constitutional government in defiance of the Spanish, French, and Austrian monarchies, and in spite of the Church party nesting and breeding discord in the heart of its constitution, are achievements that Mexicans may well be proud of, and that all Americans may admire.

There are some coincidences in the history of Mexican independence that are not the results of accident, which have a marked significance in the present condition of that country. French usurpation in Spain, in 1810, gave the first impulse to Mexican independence, and, fifty years later, French invasion united the Mexican people, for the first time, in one powerful and compact body, to assert and defend, and to finally establish, their right to rule in their own country, free from all foreign surveillance.

In 1810 the native Indians opened the struggle of the war of independence in Mexico by acts of the most desperate devotion to the cause of liberty, and they renewed their sacrifices on every occasion that offered during the sixty years of civil commotion that followed. The work which they thus inaugurated and sustained was not completed until Benito Juarez, a native Indian, led the people with extraordinary ability and courage, and drove the French invaders from Mexico. It was then, and not until then, that Mexico was liberated from the toils of conspiracy and the grasp of foreign rule. That was the natal day of Mexico.

Those who would disparage the capacity of Mexicans to perform the highest functions of free government, forget their history and ignore their success in founding and defending a great republic. They did that for Mexico which the French and Spanish governments exerted their whole power to prevent; and now they are a permanent and powerful republic, while France and Spain are still oscillating between self-government and monarchical rule, unable to determine which form of government is best adapted to the genius of their people.

These general views of the condition of Mexico, and of the attitude of the two republics toward each other, sufficiently present the natural and just basis of confidence, sincerity, and fidelity upon which they should proceed, by treaties and legislation, to increase the friendly intercourse of their people.

Both countries are setting out upon a new course of development, and their railway systems are bringing them into the most intimate trade relations. Much that must be done to facilitate this new movement can only be wisely accomplished through treaties and conventions. By such means the wants of the people of each country can be authentically stated to the other, as well as the concessions that can be mutually agreed to as a guide to the legislative tribunals in providing laws to meet the necessities of commerce in both governments. Without some such agreement there would be a degree of uncertainty of action in the legislatures that would lead to confusion and misunderstanding. Our existing policy, which has grown up without the assistance of proper treaties, has left the frontiers open to raiders, smugglers, and depredators; the actual boundaries are still in dispute; there is no efficient quarantine of the lower Rio Grande; the *Zona Libre* has caused serious complaint as an encouragement of smuggling; and the exclusion of

foreigners from the right to own land in Mexico, within sixty miles of the frontier, has led to free criticism and unfavorable comment. Legislation is more likely to become retaliatory than friendly and harmonious, when there is no preliminary understanding as to the measures through which reciprocal advantages would be granted by each government to the other.

There is enough in the sisterhood of the two great republics that lead the Latin and the English-speaking races in the practical course of free government, to remove every cause that might interrupt their most cordial friendship, even if an ocean lay between them. But they are the nearest of neighbors, without so much as a natural landmark to designate the line that divides them along a frontier of five hundred miles.

Both countries possess extraordinary wealth of commercial resources. They are in actual competition in only a few of their native productions, while the great bulk of what each country produces is needed in the other. Our frontiers are coterminous on the north and east of Mexico, and on the west and south our coast-lines are unbroken prolongations of the borders of the two great oceans, which approach each other within the distance of one hundred and thirty miles at Tehuantepec. Mexico's great peninsula of Yucatan projects boldly into the sea, and commands the southern entrance to the Gulf of Mexico, and our peninsula of Florida leads out far to the south and commands the eastern mouth of the Gulf.

The distance between Cape Sable and Cape Catoche is about four hundred and fifty miles, of which more than one-half is occupied by Cuba and other islands; so that the two republics have virtually the military and commercial command of the Gulf of Mexico, with its 700,000 square miles of deep and quiet waters, abounding in valuable fisheries, and receiving the commerce of rivers draining the largest and most fertile areas in the world.

When Key West is connected with the main-land by railroad or ship-channel, and Cape Catoche is connected by railway with the Mexican system and with the interoceanic canals, a sea will be practically inclosed within the lines of the two republics that will add more to the civilization and wealth of the Western Hemisphere than the Mediterranean has contributed to the advancement and elevation of the human family in Europe, Asia, and Africa, which inclose its waters.

If, in contemplating this mere outline of our natural and political relations with Mexico, there should linger in the mind of any citizen of either country a prejudice, resentment, or jealousy that would cause him to hesitate in giving welcome to the most sincere and faithful friendship with the other, it seems that a mere glance at the great possibilities of the future that opens before us would compel him to yield to the manifest good of his country. We are now entering upon a new epoch, and beginning a new and greater career, hand in hand with Mexico. Let it not be said of us that we failed to appreciate the opportunity of adding to our greatness and wealth by assisting Mexico to add to hers, through such treaty relations with that government, and such honest friendship toward her people, as will give them a perfect assurance of their independence and autonomy against all the powers of the earth, and will establish the greatest reciprocal advantages of trade and navigation between both countries.

The peace and tranquillity of our sister republic, and her increasing strength and influence, will be the strongest proof we can give to the world that Mexico and the United States have demonstrated the power of free, democratic, and republican government to give security to liberty and happiness to mankind.

JOHN T. MORGAN.